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ABSTRACT

For most student teachers, practice teaching is a difficult and anxiety-provoking experience. Anxiety arises when feelings of self-adequacy and security are threatened. A survey of 84 teacher education majors shows that anxiety levels are often high immediately prior to the internship: however, the anxiety level gradually declines by the middle of the practice teaching. These students tend to approach classroom control as a means of producing a less anxiety-provoking atmosphere. Interviews with 24 student teachers indicate that most anxiety stems from concerns about: 1) fulfilling expectations, 2) relating to pupils, 3) relating to cooperating teachers and supervisors, and 4) achieving lesson goals. This anxiety is expressed through physical symptoms, thoughts of failure, and various methods of "coping" (responses associated with threat reduction). Despite the decrease in the anxiety level that comes with the accumulation of experience, teachers will continue to feel the stress and strains that are a part of their profession. (CJ)

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THE SOURCES AND EXPERIENCE OF ANXIETY IN PRACTICE TEACHING[1,2]

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The stresses and strains associated with day to day teaching are widely recognised and in the case of the student teacher tend often to reach traumatic proportions. Student teachers typically lack not only the range of skills, the confidence and the status of the experienced teacher, but are also often engaged in ruminations about whether they really want to become a teacher at all. For them, therefore, conflict and uncertainty within themselves about their career choice adds to the teaching problems that confront them in the classroom. Little study, however, has been made of the sources of concern and anxiety in pre-service or experienced teachers, nor of how that concern or anxiety is expressed in their behaviour while teaching and interacting with pupils (Keavney and Sinclair, 1978). Is the anxiety simply experienced in terms of unpleasant feelings, or are there behavioural consequences that influence in important ways their teaching styles and procedures, and techniques of classroom control and discipline? Sinclair, Heys and Kemmis (1974) have argued that anxiety arises when the person's feelings of self adequacy and security are threatened. Once aroused it is expressed in feelings identifiable as anxiety and also in terms of coping behaviours designed to protect the person's ego against the perceived threat. If complete avoidance of the threat is impossible a common response is to behave in ways that increase the person's feelings of control over the situation. With the teacher this may result, for instance, in keeping to the tried and familiar with respect to subject matter or teaching method and a reluctance to use or persevere with new ideas and techniques. It may also result in an increasing vigilence with respect to pupil behaviour and the use of increasingly authoritarian techniques of classroom management. In these ways anxious teachers may attempt to structure the situation in ways that reduce the likelihood of what transpires passing out of their control. Such behaviours, while having some personal benefits for the teacher in alleviating anxiety feelings and increasing security feelings may have adverse consequences for the pupils in terms of their personal well-being and their learning and performance.

A number of studies have found that the sources of teacher anxiety change and the intensity of anxiety about teaching falls with teaching experience. Fuller (1969) has identified a developmental trend

in relation to the concerns of teachers. The pre-teaching phase is characterised by non-concern, beginning teachers are primarily concerned about self-adequacy, and experienced teachers with concerns about teaching tasks and their pupils. Studies by Thompson (1963), Parsons (1973), Poole and Gaudry (1974) and Nicoll (1975) have recorded falls in teacher anxiety with teaching experience. The study of Poole and Gaudry (1974) involved student teachers in a three week initial practice teaching experience. While teacher anxiety fell over the three week period, no change was recorded with respect to dogmatism. In a study by Campbell and Williamson (1973), also with student teachers, a substantial but not significant increase was recorded in dogmatism. By the end of the practice, moreover, the student teachers were significantly more dogmatic than their co-operating teachers. Nicoll (1975) monitored student teacher feelings and attitudes over a six week practice teaching period. Rather than the dogmatism scale she used a measure of Pupil Control Ideology (Willower, Eidell and Hoy, 1967). The P.C.I. measures classroom control along a dimension ranging from custodial attitudes to humanistic and was thought to be more situationally relevant than the more general dogmatism scale. Nicoll found significant decreases in anxiety accompanied by increasingly more custodial attitudes. Interaction analyses of audiotapes taken of lessons in the second, fourth and sixth weeks of the practice gave further independent evidence of the significant increase in authoritarian attitudes.

In the present study state anxiety and P.C.I. were again monitored, this time over a three week practice teaching period and using university Bachelor of Education (Primary) students at different stages of their four year course. This provided an opportunity to replicate and extend Nicoll's earlier findings and also to identify students in the program varying in anxiety experienced and coping effectiveness during practice teaching for further study and assistance.

Method

The subjects were the total groups of B.Ed. primary students in years III (N = 51) and IV (N = 65) of the four year program. In the week prior to teaching practice they completed the A-trait scale, the A-state scale (with instructions asking them to anticipate how anxious they expected to feel while teaching) and the P.C.I. inventory. At the same

time they were given an envelope containing two further questionnaires. One questionnaire consisted of the A-state scale, this time asking the students to "think back over your lessons taught so far and indicate how you typically felt while you were in the process of teaching", and was to be filled out in the middle of the second week of the practice. That same scale with the same instructions was part of the second questionnaire together with the P.C.I. which was to be filled out at the end of the third week of the practice. A stamped addressed envelope was provided for the return of the questionnaires. A complete set of completed questionnaires was received from 45 Year III students (88%) and 39 Year IV students (60%).

Results

Changes in A-state were analysed by a repeated measures analysis of variance involving two groups of subjects (Education III and Education IV), tested over three occasions (before, in the middle of, and at the end of teaching practice). Cell means are presented in Table 1 and the summary of the analysis of variance in Table 2. The occasions main effect

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of A-state Scores for Two Groups of Subjects recorded on Three occasions in the Course of a Teaching Practice

	N	Occasions					
		1		2		3	
		MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
Primary Education III	45	44.40	9.65	39.98	9.13	40.87	8.54
Primary Education IV	39	50.35	12.44	44.62	11.52	40.44	11.01

Table 2: Summary of the Analysis of Variance of A-state Scores for Two Groups of Subjects Recorded on Three Occasions in the Course of a Teaching Practice

Source	Sum of Squares	df	mean square	F	p
Groups	703.47	1	703.47	2.73	NS
Subjects within groups	21116 39	82	257.52		
Occasions	1970.58	2	985.29	30.07	<.01
Groups X Occasions	490.53	2	245.26	7.49	<.01
Occasions X subjects within groups	5374.06	164	32.77		

was significant, together with the groups X occasions interaction. From Table 1 it will be observed that for the Education IV group the mean anxiety score fell steadily from occasion to occasion. For the Education III group the mean score fell from before practice to the middle of practice but had not fallen further by the end of practice. While the Education IV group showed higher anxiety levels prior to practice and in the middle of practice than the Education III group there was no group difference at the end of practice. In general terms the result replicates the earlier study of Nicoll (1975), this time with subjects from a markedly different program of teacher education, and over a much shorter practice teaching period.

Anxiety about teaching, therefore, is high the week before practice but by the middle of the practice has fallen quite considerably. The higher level of anxiety among the fourth year students is of interest. Perhaps it reflects the fact that they have already had several practice teaching experiences in their previous year, whereas this is the first such experience for the third year students. The reality of the stresses faced in the earlier experiences may serve to increase their apprehension for the experience ahead. Alternatively the fourth year students are in their final year of training and their closer proximity to graduation, particularly in a time of widespread teacher unemployment, may serve to increase their anxiety about their capabilities. With this in mind it will be of interest to observe whether the 1979 Education III group show higher levels of anxiety prior to their 1980 first practice teaching experience in Education IV.

An impression of change in attitude and behaviour with respect to controlling pupils is gained from administrations of the P.C.I. prior to and at the end of practice teaching. Group means and the summary table of the repeated measures analysis of variance are provided in Tables 3 and 4 respectively. The occasions effect was the sole significant result.

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations of P.C.I. scores for Two Groups of Subjects Recorded Prior to and at the end of Teaching Practice

	N	Occasions			
		1		2	
		MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
Primary Education III	45	46.73	6.10	50.42	7.96
Primary Education IV	39	48.72	7.91	50.36	7.83

Table 4: Summary of the Analysis of Variance of P.C.I. Scores for Two Groups of Subjects Recorded prior to and at the end of Teaching Practice

Source	Sum of squares	df	mean square	F	p
Groups	38.56	1	38.56	.42	NS
Subjects within groups	7523.34	82	91.75		
Occasions	314.88	1	314.88	16.10	<.01
Groups X Occasions	43.81	1	43.81	2.24	NS
Occasions x subjects within groups	1603.31	82	19.55		

As the means show, attitudes towards classroom control became more custodial. Again the result is an interesting one replicating the earlier findings of Nicoll. Anxiety steadily fell while custodial attitudes increased. Is the relationship causal? Is it that in coping with stress and anxiety the student teacher adopts more and more authoritarian and dogmatic attitudes in an attempt to increase feelings of security and control. Certainly this possibility is consistent with the conceptualization of anxiety and its effects presented earlier. On the other hand, it is also possible that the reality of the classroom and the socializing influence of the cooperating teacher and other teachers at the school results in the student teacher adopting more custodial attitudes in relation to the pupils which succeed, thereby alleviating anxiety. Further studies using interviews and perhaps more experimental techniques will be needed to throw light on these alternative possibilities. Either way the student teacher appears to be very much the meat in the sandwich. In his teacher education courses the importance of humanistic ideals is stressed. In the practice teaching situation such ideals are strongly challenged either by the stresses and strains encountered in the teaching situation itself or by attitudes and perhaps advice of practising teachers. The conflict in ideals involved will tend to increase the pressures and strains on the student teacher.

The first phase of the study confirms the significance of anxiety feelings associated with practice teaching. There is evidence of considerable anxiety prior to practice teaching which steadily reduces in the course of the practice teaching itself. At the same time attitudes towards classroom control grow steadily more custodial. It is hypothesized that these two events are related with increasing custodial attitudes arising from an attempt by the student teacher to establish a personally safer and less anxiety-arousing environment.

The mean scores with respect to state anxiety and pupil control ideology do little more than summarise the surface manifestations of reactions to teaching practice. They provide little information about the qualitative characteristics of the anxiety experience; the way in which anxiety expresses itself in feeling states and in the behaviour of the teacher. They also provide little information about the sources of threat and anxiety in the classroom. Such information is important for a fuller understanding of teacher anxiety during practice teaching and for exploring ways by which teacher educators may intervene to assist student teachers. The next phase of the study, an interview, was designed to gather such information.

The Interview

Twenty-eight students, 14 from each year of the B.Ed. primary programme participated in a semi-structured interview dealing with feelings and reactions to the block teaching practice referred to in Phase 1. In selecting those students an attempt was made within each year group to include students who revealed different patterns of anxiety through the period of the practice. Specifically, students were selected who had one of the following patterns:

a) high anxiety prior to and during the teaching practice
b) low anxiety prior to but high anxiety during the practice
c) high anxiety prior to but significantly lower anxiety during the practice
d) low anxiety prior to and during the teaching practice.

Patterns a and b could loosely be regarded as patterns indicating unsuccessful coping with anxiety during the practice while patterns c and d could be regarded as indicating successful coping with anxiety. These groupings were formed for purposes of later analysis. However, those analyses are not yet completed and are not presented in this report. The use of these groupings, however, did ensure that the interviewees did represent the full range of anxiety reaction.

The interview lasted for approximately 75 minutes. A list of questions was established prior to the interview although this provided only a loose structure and every effort was made to encourage the interviewee to elaborate, expand and comment on any aspect of practice teach-

ing of concern. The interviewer was not aware of the students' patterns of anxiety experience, was not in any way associated with their teacher education program and had not, in fact, personally met any of the interviewees prior to the interview. Information gathered in the interview ranged from general reactions to the practice, through relationships with pupils, supervisors, and co-operating teachers to reactions about particular successful and unsuccessful lessons, and information about lesson preparation and the effects of the practice on their personal lives. The students were assured of the confidentiality of the content of the interview.

The main purpose of the interview was to delve deeper into the stresses and strains of the teaching practice and in particular identify sources of threat and anxiety, and the way in which the anxiety expressed itself in feeling states and in the behaviour of the teacher. The following discussion of sources of anxiety will be organized around the student teachers' concerns about

a) Fulfilling self-expectations
b) Relating to pupils
c) Relating to co-operating teachers and supervisors
d) Achieving lesson goals

The analysis of the interview data is still at an early stage. The account that follows is quite impressionistic and the attempt has been made to use the student teachers' own words in describing their practice teaching experience wherever possible. More quantitative and detailed analyses are underway and will be reported at a later date.

One of the striking impressions gained from the interviews is the amount of emotion and feeling associated with lessons taught. Successful lessons give rise to strong feelings of pride and elation, unsuccessful lessons generate anxiety, frustration, even despair. The success of the lesson and the feelings engendered most often appear to be associated with the response of the pupils. Strong positive feelings are associated with lessons in which the pupils are interested and enthusiastic and in which rapport between teacher and pupil is established. Anxiety and frustration arise when pupils fail to show interest and attention and especially when control is lost. When asked for their overall impression of the teaching practice this too is commonly expressed in feeling terms:

Wonderful! I loved it. I didn't want to leave.

I thought it was my best. I was doing my own thing, and the kids got a lot out of it too.

I enjoyed the kids. I enjoyed applying the theory I'd learnt. I didn't enjoy the teacher or the school.

My teaching wasn't as good as it could have been but it was good experience. The teachers were happy with it.

No, shocking! The teacher, the supervisor, the school.

No. Not a good relationship with the teacher or the class. It may have been my expectation. I didn't expect another slow class. But I can't change my mood.

For some therefore, the experience is exhilarating, for others the enjoyment is qualified, and for a minority the worst fears are confirmed. It is with the fears, the anxiety and the sources of those experiences that we will now be concerned.

Sources of Anxiety

Fulfilling Self-Expectations

Anxiety is aroused when the person perceives a danger that strongly held expectations about his adequacy will be placed in jeopardy. Francis Fuller (1969) concluded that such anxiety about self-adequacy was the primary concern of the beginning teacher and that it was only after a number of years of teaching experience that it was replaced as the dominant concern by ones associated with achieving task goals in the classroom and meeting the needs of individual students.

From the interviews it became clear that the student teacher often experienced practice teaching as primarily a test of their adequacy as a prospective teacher or even as a person. This emphasis tends to be at odds with practice teaching objectives as perceived by their teacher educators. The teacher educator most often views practice teaching as a vital learning component of the total program. The students interviewed, however, tended to focus on the experience not in terms of what they had learnt, but rather on whether they had succeeded or failed. All students are inclined to make summary judgments at the end of a block practice period. But it became clear from the interviews that many students also viewed each lesson as a test, to be passed or failed. They talked less

about what they had learnt from their mistakes or achievements than whether the lesson had "worked" or not.

As one student put it:

> My friends outside the course say I'm lucky because we don't have exams, but I tell them we have 3 weeks of exams, every day, 3 times a year.

For the high-anxious student who reacts to practice in this way the period is little less than a continuous series of crises to be endured. Moreover, the criteria for whether the lesson/test has been a failure or success are not objective and external, but are set individually and subjectively by each student. Such expectations of self are often based on some ideal of the "good teacher" and in terms of most student teachers' early skills, quite unrealistic. Success in teaching was seen by many interviewed students to reflect on their feelings about themselves and their personal adequacy and worth. Such self-concern confirms the findings of Fuller (1969). Below appear some thoughts expressed by students about "failed" lessons:

> I thought 'I'm a failure'.
>
> I was afraid I'd appear inadequate, that the teacher would see I had no control.
>
> I worry all the time. I never feel confident. I feel I'm wrong.
>
> I'm overconscious of myself, not thinking of the children.

Blame for "failed lessons" was most frequently attributed to themselves in such terms as inappropriate preparation or choice of task, inability to "control" the class, or general personal inadequacy. There clearly seems to be a need in this regard to help students arrive at more realistic expectations about their teaching performance at this early stage and also to help them to look more analytically at their individual lessons and the multiplicity of factors determining a lesson's "success".

Relating to Pupils

It has already been remarked that successful and unsuccessful lessons and associated feelings of adequacy are strongly influenced by pupil reactions. For example, successful lessons were described as

follows:

> Control was no problem because they were interested. Everything I'd outlined got done. They fed back that they'd enjoyed it and that it was good and worthwhile.
>
> The kids really loved the lesson. I was really pleased. I'd taught them a new skill that they really wanted to learn.
>
> I was zappy! The kids were right! It was all on cue, well paced. I responded to them. They all learned that day. I felt incredible, couldn't believe it. I felt I was outside watching myself. 'It's working'. I was bouncing.
>
> I thought I'd fall on my face and I didn't. They enjoyed it. That's the big thing.

Similarly lessons which provoked teacher anxiety were often lessons in which the pupils did not respond.

> Disaster. If what's in the kids' minds just doesn't click in, it just isn't appropriate. Could be the kids' mood or your lapse, they're all different.
>
> When I get an idea I get all wrapped up in it, not considering the kids. I realised they weren't happy with it. I was upset, I was not relating to them. After the lesson I was in tears, but not in the classroom.
>
> They weren't responding as I thought they would. They were being silly, throwing the ball where I couldn't catch it. They weren't doing what I wanted.
>
> It was a "yelling" teacher and a supervised lesson. It wasn't prepared and it went all wrong. I couldn't control them. I was screaming and yelling. I was in tears afterwards. I nearly left teaching. I screamed and gave up.
>
> This third grade were chaotic. They couldn't listen. They were not wrecking anything, just wrestling, punching, not really hurting anything. We screamed at them and couldn't hear ourselves.
>
> Loss of control is the most worrying thing.

As would be expected classroom control problems are a particularly common source of anxiety although worries over helping an individual child with difficulties, or coping with supervision appear to be just as great and sometimes even greater. Most of the interviewees saw their primary task to be that of motivating children. Control was seen as a measure

to be taken only when one or a number of children were not motivated and therefore were disturbing the class. Students preferred to see themselves as "a friend" to the children and not "an authority figure". Much of the "control" problem of practice teaching may, in fact, reflect the struggle of students as they attempt to reconcile conflicting teacher roles, as their comments below indicate:

> Discipline is a necessary evil. I don't want to be authoritarian. I'm idealist but I'll change.
>
> I'm not a controlling person, coming and being able to control by being there. They have to get used to my style.
>
> I hate the words 'control' and 'discipline'. I shudder to hear them.

Is it possible that as teacher educators we tend to ignore the conflicts aroused in students about control and discipline? It is perhaps expected that once students become full-time teachers, they will become socialized into the "reality" of the classroom. More time could be devoted to discussing with students more realistic attitudes towards classroom control and how it may be achieved in humanistic ways. Many students feel that to act in an authoritarian way is to "fail" as a teacher. When practice teaching situations arise which require some kind of controlling behaviour, the student's anxiety level is likely to be increased if such intervention is seen as an admission of failure.

The overall picture of practice teaching which the total range of interviews conveys therefore is one in which students set themselves very high (some would say idealistic) standards of preparation, presentation and interaction. They become very anxious about trying to live up to these self-imposed standards - are elated when they do, but despondent when they don't.

Relations with Co-Operating Teachers and Supervisors

a) Conflicting advice and criticism

> The student is the meat in the sandwich. You cannot please both the teacher and the supervisor and the class belong firstly to the teacher.

This type of comment was commonly made pointing up a conflict that often

exists between the teaching ideals of the teacher education course, the supervisor, the cooperating teacher and the student concerned. If evaluation is already a strong concern how much more so must it become when those passing comment on the student teacher work from rather different standards and ideals. High anxiety levels and confusion are hardly surprising in situations such as those described below:

> In this prac I thought I'd be harder and the supervisor said I was too authoritarian, but the teacher said I was too lenient.

> The noise level was too high. I'd done what the teacher suggested because it's her class, and later the supervisor said that method caused the noise, but then the teacher said the supervisor was wrong, so I got two contradictory responses.

The problem is heightened for an anxious student who often believes the opinions of the co-operating teacher and supervisor to be very important. Unwilling to dismiss either point of view as wrong, the student may be torn between the two.

b) The act of supervision

Previous literature on the area of anxiety among student teachers has highlighted supervision as a major stress factor (Erickson and Rudd, 1967; Yee, 1968). From the interview it would appear that the act of being supervised was the source of tension, not necessarily the relationship between student and supervisor. Many of the students resented the supervisor's evaluative function while finding the supervisor as a person supportive and helpful. The supervised lesson was generally viewed as being different from other lessons and students went to extraordinary trouble to prepare and execute such lessons, gearing them to the supervisor's fancies. For the low-anxious students the "performance" was just a necessary ritual:

> It's easy to put on a sideshow for supervisors and they don't know.

But for the highly-anxious student, the experience is not only stressful, but neither is it typical of that student's teaching nor very useful to future professional development:

> If you know the supervisor's reputation, you do what's safe - mine was traditional.
>
> You know their reputation. You have to do what they want. You have to pass. Some only want to see certain things.
>
> The supervisor makes you nervous. You can't concentrate on kids.
>
> If he'll join in, talk to kids, take the pressure off, that's great. Staring at you puts you off. You feel on display.
>
> I had to comfort a boy who got hurt. I got flustered. Because it was a supervised lesson it should be running smoothly. I had to stop teaching to look after him. It only worried me because it was supervised. I'd prepared the supervised lessons extra specially because that's what's going to count.
>
> If the supervisor's coming you try harder for that lesson, leave preparing it till after the others because you're struggling for ideas and end up doing it at midnight when you're tired, so it goes worst.

Other interviewees would have welcomed more feedback on their teaching, and less upon aspects of their preparation:

> He seemed more worried about how I punctuated my lesson notes than how I taught.

For some, supervision is equated with negative criticism:

> The supervisor should try to say <u>something</u> nice, just one, at least.

For the anxious student, it would seem, the supervisor needs to take more time, to establish rapport, and to be seen much more as an adviser than a critic. Of how many supervisors is this thumb-sketch true?

> Supervisors don't see enough...they tend to rush in - 'Show me a lesson - right, come outside, - goodbye'.
>
> The ideal would be to have a supervisor at the school all or half the time. The student can say 'Come and see this lesson', and they can consult and talk to them. A teacher could do this but I've never had one who would.

c) The artificiality of the practice teaching situation

Another factor contributing to the stress and strain of practice teaching is that as a situation it is quite artificial and lacking in reality. Final year students particularly perceived the artificiality of teaching a string of unrelated discrete lessons, many of which have no relevance to the teacher's current program. Many also resented being presented with situations already organized by the teacher, and in which "the teacher picked up the pieces afterwards".

Similarly the student's status in the school is often an unenviable one - in a kind of limbo, not a pupil (although still called a student), but not as important or authoratative as a teacher. Being made to feel that he or she is not really a teacher does little to increase the student's confidence in the classroom. The attitudes of supervisors, school staffs, and individual co-operating teachers can influence the way students are accepted by children, as well as the students' own views of themselves:

> I didn't like being watched, having to fit in so closely with someone else. In prac it's so obvious you're the learner, the junior.
>
> There are subtle clues whether the teacher accepts you, respects you as a teacher, and the kids know that.

An undermining of student confidence cannot assist the already anxious student.

Further stress arises for the student through an awareness that schools do not always accept them willingly. In this particular teacher education program, despite the fact that teachers are asked to nominate individually whether or not they wish to accept students, it soon appears obvious to students that some co-operating teachers are "co-operating" only under duress. It is not surprising that students' anxiety is heightened in situations they perceive as hostile or even simply "disinterested". It is unlikely that a practice in which the student's presence is resented will enhance attitudes to self, to teaching or to the teaching fraternity. Some contrasting instances revealed through the interviews are:

> The staff are supportive, helpful, accepting.
>
> The school's so conducive to having students.

> In some schools at least, the principal just allots students to teachers whether a teacher wants one or not. Teachers resent it. If they don't want a student they shouldn't have one. It makes a terrible prac.
>
> Teachers should be scanned more carefully. They tend to be forced, obliged to have students.

d) The relationship between student-teacher and co-operating teacher

Although few students cited conflict with their co-operating teacher as a major source of anxiety, it would appear that where the relationship between student and co-operating teacher was characterised by differences in ideals, personality, methods or expectations, the student's self-confidence was weakened, and anxiety responses over control, or the supervised lesson, were more likely to occur. In the extreme:

> The co-operating teacher can be a monster, can ruin a prac.

Students, particularly those lacking in self-confidence, tend to see the co-operating teacher very much as a superior whose opinion, even if not shared, is not to be questioned. Perhaps as teacher-educators, it is unrealistic to expect some students to take the initiative in negotiating with co-operating teachers on areas such as lesson content, teaching strategies, grouping, and so on. It may be the task of teacher education to prepare students and advise them on ways of handling relationships with the co-operating teacher in a tactful but more assertive manner. As one interviewee put it:

> You need more liaison between student and teacher. If it's left to the student you can't assert yourself to get what you want.

In some cases, students need to be encouraged to draw more heavily on the teacher's experience and expertise. A response from a typical easily-intimated, polite student was:

> I feel I'm imposing. They have their own workload.
>
> I hoped she would look at my lesson notes but she wouldn't. (Did you ask for help?) I didn't ask. I used to come in early because I knew she did and I sat there with my book hoping she would look at it. But she never did; she seemed disinterested.

Such reticence on the student's part could markedly affect the quality of the practice teaching experience. Many interviewed students would have welcomed some assistance from teachers in areas such as suggestions and lesson ideas, comments on lesson notes, constructive lesson criticism, but believed that if the help were not forthcoming, they were not in a position to request it. This being the case, there need to be even greater attempts by teacher educators to impress upon co-operating teachers the importance of their role.

In this particular practice-teaching program, it is assumed that there is a common set of needs shared by all student teachers. The interview data, however, revealed that many final year (Year 4) students expressed different needs from those in Year 3 who were in their first year of practice teaching. Whereas the latter group looked to the teacher for support, the former group wanted the teacher to provide more information about specific aspects of their teaching.

> Prac teaching is no help now. I get no teacher feedback, which I want, so I want a class of my own.

> She did some evaluation but not enough. She was over-encouraging and played down my faults. That's alright in Ed. III but now it's unjustified. You can evaluate your own lessons by now.

Final year students were particularly aware that practice teaching was not the "real thing" - too many important day-to-day decisions did not rest in their hands.

> I used to think the more prac the better, but now I see it's not the real thing. It's not your class. You're not responsible. You're in the shadow of the teacher.

On a more positive note, students were quick to acknowledge and praise a good co-operating teacher. They described such a teacher as being helpful, supportive, a good model, friendly, providing lots of points and ideas, and for final year students, being watchful and giving feedback and constructive criticism.

Achieving Lesson Goals

Most teacher-education programs stress that good teaching is in large part dependent upon thorough preparation. The twenty-eight inter-

viewed students certainly believed this to be true! The average amount of time per night expended on lesson preparation (usually for 3 lessons) was claimed to be 5 hours, with a range of 2-8 hours. Most preparation was done the night before lessons were to be taught, so that students were facing very long days and hence little sleep:

> It was about 5 hours per night for that prac. I know when a lesson will go badly and I suppose it could have been improved but I was too tired. There's no time to anticipate questions and problems. It could take up to 3 hours more to do that.

The actual stress of learning to teach was then compounded by the stress on home life which practice imposed:

> What I remember most about this prac is late nights, chaos at home, my poor husband.

It is clear that the students consider lesson preparation to be of very great importance, perhaps to the point of overvaluing it. Thorough preparation was the factor most commonly cited as a key to success. As one highly-anxious student put it:

> You need to know what to get across to them. Must be adequately prepared. I couldn't do it without my notes.

For some students, thorough, even fastidious preparation may be used for emotional purposes as a hedge against the uncertainties of the actual teaching experience. As an emotional crutch, however, there is the danger that it may be adhered to quite rigidly and, from a long term point of view this could impede students from developing a flexible, responsive approach to the dynamics of the teaching situation. This would seem to be the case for some of the students interviewed, who felt powerless to alter anything, to deviate from their planned lesson notes when a lesson was "going wrong".

> I just kept going.
>
> The lesson just dragged on and on.
>
> I tried everything to get them to do it.

For such students, there is a need to develop more adequately the ability to "think on one's feet", to experiment, and perhaps to work from less detailed "blueprints". The difficulty is compounded in cases where a

student is not using his or her own ideas, but has prepared a lesson with content and procedures largely prescribed by the co-operating teacher.

> I had to keep going according to the teacher's plan. I should have changed it. Now I might be able to.

When a student has invested much time, energy, and probably anxiety in preparing a lesson, it is all the more devastating when the children do not appear to appreciate it. Often students regarded such experiences as personal failure. They resented the energy expended in preparation, and some projected their feelings onto the children:

> I said 'I've gone to a lot of trouble....' They were remorseful but only for 10 minutes.
>
> I resented the waste of all that preparation when they weren't interested. It was humbling.
>
> This was the time I thought of them as ungrates. I thought 'I've given you the game instead of mechanical arithmetic from a text book, which you don't like, and you don't take it seriously'.
>
> I hated them. I never hated anyone so much.

The problem becomes a vicious circle. The students are anxious, prepare thoroughly, but still the lesson doesn't succeed. Disappointed, they resent all the work, but hope that even more thorough preparation will turn the next day's lessons into successes. As teacher-educators, we could assist such students to develop alternative teaching strategies to overcome such an over-reliance on their set lesson plan.

The demands in time caused by lesson preparation together with the high levels of anxiety experienced have repercussions on other aspects of the students' lives as well. Social activities fall by the wayside and many appear to be able to cope only through the support of parents and friends. Students commented:

> It's hell. I don't see my fiancé. I can't even keep the weekends free. I have to work on Sunday afternoon.
>
> If my husband hadn't been supportive I'd have broken down. I was at breakdown point after 3 weeks because of the teacher.
>
> I go home and say 'Mum, what'll I do?' She has ideas.
>
> I get run down during prac and feel I need to go into

> hospital at the end, but I made it. My mother drops me at school. I get irritable in prac so I chose to be close. I wasn't prepared to travel. It means I've had no experience with migrants.
>
> I get defensive about prac. For instance visitors - I guess they soon know and they don't come around. At weekends I go out. I put prac first. I brush everyting else out of my mind. If I'm at prac I'm at prac.

While not wishing to over-dramatise the plight of the student teacher, it would seem important for us as teacher-educators to give thought to the quality of the practice teaching experience, and recognise that that quality is difficult to sustain because of the stresses and strains involved especially during the final week(s).

The Expression of Anxiety

One of the aims of the student interviews was to try and tap the ways in which students experienced and expressed anxiety. Sinclair, Heys and Kemmis (1974) have argued that anxiety states are expressed in three major ways:

(1) somatic responses
(2) thoughts about inability to cope with threat
(3) coping styles that are over-learned patterns of responding previously associated with threat reduction.

The first two categories, sometimes called emotionality and worry, were much in evidence in the students' recalling of anxious situations.

Somatic Responses

Many students could recall experiencing physical symptoms as part of an anxiety-provoking teaching situation. However they also tended to claim that these symptoms were hidden, and were not made manifest to others in the classroom. The threat of appearing "rattled" or afraid to the class, must throw an added strain on student teachers experiencing anxiety. The range of somatic responses and other behavioural manifestations to which the interviewees referred was quite comprehensive:

go quiet, caught for words, clam up
tense up
flustered
feel hot
sweaty palms
dry mouth
shake
blush, go red
edge on voice
forgot, lose train of thought
nervous smile
close to tears, cried (usually bottled up until end of lesson).
scream

In such a public situation as a lesson in front of thirty children, to manifest any of those symptoms would clearly be to reveal "defeat" and hence inadequacy. Little wonder that students tried hard to disguise their true feelings. In cases where the lesson was supervised, it was even more crucial to appear "on top of things".

Thoughts About Inability to Cope with Threat

Students seemed able to recall two or three thoughts they experienced at the time of anxiety. Few were related to the task in hand, that is, reducing the threat to themselves by a possible change of teaching strategy. Some thoughts reflected negative feelings about themselves, either personally or as teachers, and often doubts were experienced about the choise of teaching as a career.

I'm a failure.

No way I'll be a teacher. Why did I come back?

Is it all worth it? The teacher will think I'm incompetent.

Often the thoughts indicated a search for an appropriate coping style, initially in many cases without success. Sometimes "wishful thinking" figured and sometimes panic reactions.

What am I going to do now?

I wished they would sit down and discuss.

What can I do? (I couldn't thing of anything.)

I wished it was over.

Oh my God! I can't stop because some will not have had their turn.

I don't know how to start them clearing up. It's chaos but I know they should clear it up.

What did I do wrong?

I want to get it over.

On some occasions the students were able to cite some quite task-relevant, analytical thinking about the situation:

Those boys! I should have seen them and moved them.

I thought that since some of them were interested it couldn't be the record so I thought perhaps I should be harder on the rowdy ones, send them back to their seats and say 'Let the others listen'.

I thought of varying the lesson, but it was supervised, so I didn't.

Occasionally, their thoughts expressed hostility towards the children for creating such difficulties.

I wanted to strangle them.

I forgot the kids as people. It was self-centred.

This was the time I thought of them as ungrates.

I was angry, well, disappointed especially because I'd been looking forward to it.

Is it possible, as teacher educators, to teach students to be more rational, analytical at such times? Can teachers in fact be taught to "think on their feet"? Perhaps micro-teaching playback sessions could provide opportunities for students not only to focus on specific teaching skills, but also to recall what "trigger" prompted a chosen course of action, which aspects of the teaching situation were prominent in their minds at the time, and which they ignored. In this manner, students could gradually develop greater self-awareness and improve the decision-making processes they employ whilst teaching.

Coping Styles

It was difficult to identify common categories of coping behaviours. Students acted quite idiosyncratically. It could be argued that since the students had little experience of teaching, they therefore had

little opportunity to develop a recognisable, repeatable coping style. Thus one common response to the anxiety provoking situation was that of "inaction". For many students, the chosen tactic was to keep going, in the hope that either things would improve or an outside force would intervene.

> I just kept going. The front ones were all right. Then the teacher stopped it and made them get into rows and we went on, in rows.
>
> The lesson just dragged on and on.
>
> It started to rain. I saw that as a message from Heaven. So they had to come back in.
>
> I tried to call them together and I couldn't. Eventually the afternoon finished.

For others, abandoning the planned lesson altogether was the chosen coping strategy. It is difficult to ascertain whether such a decision is a form of escapism, avoidance, or whether in fact this was the most appropriate action.

> I abandoned the circle and the lesson.
>
> The teacher had to help. I let her take over and get them to clear up.
>
> I said 'Forget it. You don't like it. Let's do something else'. That's often what I do if it's going wrong. I'll try to change, escape, giving in to the children perhaps. It's safe for myself.
>
> I stopped it. I set them to do something else.
>
> I abandoned it. I think we went outside and drew trees.
>
> I turned off the singing tape, gave out some paper and asked them to draw whatever they liked.

Finally, a few students did attempt to rescue the situation by continuing the lesson but changing the teaching strategy. It was often by asserting authority, with varying degrees of success:

> I asked them to pay attention and they did.
>
> I tried everything to get them to do it, eventually sent one out and had another standing at the back. The others were responsive enough but they couldn't concentrate and made atypical mistakes.

> I just said 'keep quiet' and it made no difference.
>
> I pulled myself together. Made them all sit down and I delegated some of them to do jobs, while others sat down. It was very authoritarian.
>
> I kept raising my voice but I never got them controlled.

It also sometimes involved varying the planned lesson, including leaving sections out, or improvising, again with varying success.

> I cut out a lot, got them quickly to the writing. I should have changed it. Now I might be able to.
>
> I changed it as I went along. Changed my tack, skipped bits.
>
> A child suggested [a solution] and I said they could. That worked quite well.
>
> I went on to the next step. It was clear to the kids I'd given up. They were really trying to follow me.

This course of action, however, was not frequently cited and may relate back to the over-reliance on the pre-planned lesson structure. It is not enough for flexibility to be encouraged without more positive assistance. This might take the form of critically analysing alternatives to the teacher's preparation of a demonstration lesson, brainstorming in small groups, as well as more thoughtful self-analysis of students' own practice teaching lessons, perhaps aided by the classroom teacher or supervisor. How often do supervisors, after viewing lessons, suggest to students alternatives they might have considered, rather than asking and assisting them to generate their own solutions?

Anxiety, therefore, starts off high and in the course of the teaching practice some reduction is achieved. At the same time attitudes towards classroom control become increasingly more custodial. The interviews have served to confirm, however, that despite the reductions in anxiety, the stresses and strains of teaching remain a major factor ensuring that considerable anxiety will continue to be experienced. Clearly the full focus of the spotlight in practice teaching is on the

students themselves. Practice teaching is perceived by them as a personal test - a test of themselves as prospective teachers, even as adequate people. It is the evaluative aspect and the frightening prospect of losing control of the children that emerges as the central concern. Questions of trying out the suitability of particular teaching methods, of diagnosing and remediating pupil difficulties, of developing curriculum units are of rather less concern and sometimes almost pale into insignificance from the student's point of view.

For most student teachers practice teaching is a difficult and anxiety provoking experience. This indeed has been long recognised (cf. Stones and Morris, 1973). Yet it seems, if we can generalize from the group of students studied, little progress has been made in reducing the stresses and strains involved. And at a time when the tendency has been to require more and more hours of practice teaching as part of the teacher education program. To be a satisfactory experience the student needs far more support and guidance, and far more help in developing effective classroom techniques for dealing with the particular problems that arise during practice teaching. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that practice teaching is a sink or swim affair. Certainly some succeed in swimming quite expertly with little guidance. Many more, however, barely remain afloat and often are only able to do so by developing techniques which may perhaps serve the present predicament but which are unsatisfactory and even undesirable from a long term perspective. Finally a few sink and often, perhaps wisely, decide that teaching really is not the career for them.

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